

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

21 October 1999

Projects Reviewed

City Hall

Convened: 3:15pm

Adjourned: 4:15pm

Commissioners Present

Rick Sundberg

Gail Dubrow

Robert Foley

Jeff Girvin

Peter Miller

Staff Present

John Rahaim

Layne Cubell

Lyle Bicknell

Robert Scully

Karen Sherwood

Kelly Rodriguez Walker

Rebecca Walls

102199.1 Project: **City Hall**
 Phase: **Concept?**

Presenters: Peter Bohlin, Bohlin Cywinski Jackson Architects

Attendees: Beliz Brother, Artist

Marilyn Brockman, Bassetti Architects

Carla Cole, Department of Neighborhoods

Marty Curry, Seattle Planning Commission

Patrick Doherty, Design Construction and Land Use

John Eskelin, Department of Neighborhoods

Ken Johnsen, Executive Services Department, Consultant

Monica Lake, Executive Services Department, Facilities

Tina Lindinger, Bohlin Cywinski Jackson Architects

Todd Lynch, Bohlin Cywinski Jackson Architects

Bob McElhose, Design Construction and Land Use

Norma Miller, Executive Services Department

Brad Tong, Shiels Obletz Johnson

Marcia Wagoner, Pacific Rim Resources

Time: 1.0 hr. (SDC Ref. # DC00119)

The design team for the new Seattle City Hall, Bohlin Cywinski Jackson Architects and Bassetti Architects (B/BCJ), presented a model that illustrated their design approach. The team used the design Principles and Goals set forth in the Civic Center Master Plan as a point of departure and is in the process of refining their concept design. The site, located between the intersections of Cherry and James Streets and Fourth and Fifth Avenues, slopes to the west toward Elliott Bay. In a continuing effort to refine the project objectives, the team is focusing on providing a flexible building. Further, due to the limited floor area, the design will rely on extensive vertical space. The main entry will be located on Fifth Avenue with additional entries on Fourth Avenue. Hillclimb assists will also be integrated into the design. The design team has placed the entrance to City Hall, a large public reception room, and government offices opposite the glazed Fifth Avenue facade of the Justice Center in an effort to reinforce their relationship. The public reception space will be located below the council chamber and will provide direct access to the public services at City Hall. The mayor's office and key government staff offices will be located on the lower levels of the building, adjacent to the public spaces. Generally, the façades of City Hall will incorporate ample glazing. The site design will include stepped hard and soft landscaping that will provide intimate gathering and performance spaces and future landscape components will help establish a relationship with James Street. The project team is working on design details for the northeast corner of the building that may include steps and a colonnade. Because the west facade of the building will be highly visible, the project team is planning a fairly transparent building skin that will visibly illustrate the interactions between the public and government. Potential materials for the project include wood in the chamber and public areas, and granite and metal on the exterior. The color for the upper levels of the facades has yet to be chosen. Beliz Brother has been selected as the project artist and a secondary artist will be brought on board in the near future. The project team is in the process of selecting a landscape architect and the engineering firm of Ove Arup & Partners will design the sustainable components of the building.

Discussion

- Dubrow:** I would like for the Commission and design team to come to a mutual understanding of the principles of the program in order to be consistent in our evaluation of the project.
- Bohlin:** The principles are an ongoing question for everyone involved in this project and as such, we need to maintain an open and interactive dialogue.
- Sundberg:** I agree that we need an articulated set of principles that will inform the design strategy. Also, it is difficult to evaluate the design without the Justice Center building on the base model. However, it's clear that some of the solutions work well, such as the permeability of the north wall against the Bank of America building.
- Brockman:** I will send the Commission a draft of the principles in two weeks.
- Dubrow:** I appreciate and applaud your thorough consideration of the surrounding context that is clearly evident in the model. Although you seem to be headed in the right direction, there is a layer of the principles that is not being articulated.
- Sundberg:** In the last meeting we discussed the three components of government, executive, council and public, and the Commission is interested in how the third part, public, will be welcome and involved in government. Therefore, we would like to see you emphasize the public function.
- Bohlin:** Public exhibits will address this element. Also, the large reception room will be a powerful space that will accommodate the public's needs well.
- Dubrow:** I think you should consider including a citizen's meeting area that would provide direct access to government.
- Rahaim:** In the last meeting, the Commission stressed that you should think of citizens as citizens as opposed to citizens as customers.
- Girvin:** The permeability of the building reveals the site well and I encourage you to maintain this component. This is one of the few projects that honors the site.
- Miller:** Does the budget meet the needs of the project?
- Bohlin:** We have been working closely with the city to achieve our mutual goals, but the budget is fairly tight.
- Miller:** Do you see this as an area where the Design Commission may be able to help, perhaps by urging the City Council to provide additional funds?
- Bohlin:** Everyone is pulling together to meet the goals.
- Dubrow:** I believe that the design principles call for a level of quality that is integral to the project and the Design Commission is in a position to help you achieve these goals. Also, because the building will be for everyone, now and in the future, I encourage you to emphasize the citizen component in order to maintain continued funding. Can you speak to the issue of the homeless and how they will be able to occupy the building?
- Rahaim:** Related to this, the Commission could be helpful in the programming issues of the interior and exterior space.
- Brockman:** But Gail's programmatic question is how the homeless will or will not be integrated into the project.
- Dubrow:** That is, how the attitude toward homeless occupying some of these spaces, illustrates how generous or impoverished the public amenities for public space are.
- Brockman:** This is a good topic for a public forum. We can interpret the attitude, but it's very unclear right now.
- Dubrow:** Because this is a difficult issue, it is rarely addressed. I think the Design Commission can help put it on the table for discussion.
- Doherty:** You mentioned that the current massing could accommodate most of the program without moving into phase II. Is this still the case?
- Bohlin:** Yes, and I don't think we will need to move into phase II now or in the future.

Action: The Design Commission appreciates the presentation and makes the following comments and recommendations.

- The Commission appreciates seeing the model and the concept of viewing streets as connectors to the rest of the city;
- would like to hear the *design team's* conclusions on the principles of the program as opposed to the descriptions set forth in the Civic Center Master Plan;
- looks forward to receiving a draft of the principles from Marilyn Brockman in two weeks; and
- encourages the team to come back when the principles are in place.